

in these institutions trying to get an education to move forward because we know of the large number of health care providers that we need.

We are proud in the city of New York to say that we have been able to train and educate a larger percentage of physicians than all of the teaching hospitals that we have throughout our great country, and we're proud to do that. All of a sudden, we hear that some \$300 billion will be cut from the hospitals that provide this care. And it's not just by the beneficiaries that you and I know they need this care and they will be put in harm's way, but also we have to acknowledge that many of the people that work in these hospitals, a large number of them being minorities, they too will be released to join the unemployed.

So while I'm praying for our spiritual leaders to protect the vulnerable, please understand that every time we make a cut in the budget, we're cutting someone's job, and they will join the hopeless and the unemployed.

OPPOSING THE COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my ongoing concerns about human rights abuses in Colombia and to oppose any consideration of the pending United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement until tangible and sustained progress is seen on the ground. Colombia has a longstanding legacy of serious and pervasive human rights violations. Trade unionists, members of indigenous groups, and human rights defenders have been particular targets for violence. Despite some positive rhetoric by the Santos administration about improving protection of human rights, serious abuses continue.

In one recent incident reported by Human Rights Watch, seven people were massacred in southern Colombia on July 2, reportedly by FARC guerrillas. On June 25, another eight people were killed also in the southern part of the country. In both cases, children were among those killed. According to Human Rights Watch, there were 17 such massacres between January and May, 2011, resulting in a total of 76 deaths—a 21 percent increase over the same time period in 2010.

Several members of indigenous groups have been targeted and killed in recent weeks as well, ranging from children to prominent community leaders. Human Rights Watch reports that 14 members of indigenous communities have been killed in 2011 in Antioquia Department alone. Other indigenous leaders have been threatened, and dozens of families have been displaced. The Colombian Government has to act immediately to ensure a thorough investigation into these horrific

crimes and to finally end the cycle of impunity. Further, the government must take immediate steps to protect indigenous communities and other particularly vulnerable groups, as human rights groups have repeatedly demanded.

Labor leaders and trade unionists also continue to be victims of serious abuses. Though the recently agreed to Labor Action Plan commits the government, at least in writing, to take several important steps to prevent and punish these human rights violations, we have yet to see any sort of tangible progress on the ground. With recently published statistics showing that Colombia again led the world in trade unionist deaths in 2010, it is critical that we see a real reduction in violence before we even consider passing and implementing a trade deal.

The Labor Action Plan is not legally binding under the FTA before us. If violence and impunity continue, the United States will have no mechanism for delaying or halting implementation of the free trade agreement. The Labor Action Plan fails to require sustained, meaningful and measurable results. Once we enact the FTA, we lose any ability to force the Colombian Government to produce tangible change.

Mr. Speaker, I do not support the NAFTA-style trade model illustrated in the three pending Bush-negotiated free trade agreements because so-called free trade has proven destructive to the American economy and harmful to workers both in the United States and abroad. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that implementing the Colombia and South Korea free trade agreements would increase the U.S. trade deficit by \$16.8 billion and eliminate or displace 214,000 U.S. jobs. Particularly at a time when we should be focused on job creation, I strongly oppose all three FTAs, which jeopardize more jobs.

□ 1050

Finally, I find it particularly concerning that we are considering implementing an FTA with Colombia in the absence of demonstrated progress on human rights and workers rights.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot turn a blind eye to ongoing abuses, and we should not consider the trade agreement until these issues are fully resolved.

COLOMBIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to address the House and the American people regarding the Colombia free trade agreement and the negative impacts it will have on working families in the United States as well as Colombia.

Quite frankly, I am stumped as to why Congress is even considering this

trade agreement. Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a union worker. This year, 17 trade unionists were assassinated as of mid-June. Last year, 51 trade unionists were killed in Colombia.

As a Member of Congress, I have traveled to Colombia to see labor conditions there firsthand. We simply can't afford to approve an FTA with a nation as unsafe as Colombia which can't even enforce its own laws.

Like many of my colleagues, I was glad to see that the Obama administration negotiated a Labor Action Plan with the Colombian Government. Both morally and economically, it is imperative that Colombia address some of these concerns regarding human and labor rights for workers. The administration says the Labor Action Plan has been met. The problem is that the Labor Action Plan doesn't go far enough.

Many of my colleagues might question whether labor conditions in a foreign country could really impact job prospects of their constituents here in the United States. Well, when you consider that for years American workers have been competing for jobs with nations that have weaker labor and environmental standards, it is no wonder that we are losing jobs here in the United States.

Let me be blunt: if joining a union means putting your life on the line, there is no freedom. There is no fair competition. Without fair competition, we will see even more American jobs shipped overseas. I think we can all agree that the last thing that this country needs right now is to lose more jobs.

Let me be clear. I am committed to trade. Trade can benefit our Nation, our businesses, and our working families. In fact, I am a member of President Obama's Export Council, and the goal there is to double American exports in 5 years, not to export American jobs.

The fact of the matter is that the Colombia free trade agreement doesn't help American working families. It really benefits transnational corporations. These transnational corporations already repress Colombian workers. Nothing under this agreement makes the lives of Colombian workers better. Nothing under this agreement makes the lives of U.S. workers better. They don't get an equal share of the benefits of this free trade agreement.

Why are we rushing to approve an agreement when workers in Colombia don't even want it? Even worse, once the agreement is in effect, the U.S. loses our most important leverage to see that the human rights situation improves in Colombia. So I ask again: why the rush?

Congress should wait to see if Colombia institutes the Labor Action Plan, as they have promised. After that, we can determine if conditions for working families in Colombia actually improve. The Labor Action Plan is a good

first step, but it won't fix Colombia's problems overnight.

You would hope that an international trade agreement would bring jobs with it. To give my colleagues some idea why there are problems with the Colombia FTA, the U.S. International Trade Commission doesn't predict that the Colombia FTA would create jobs. Now, the U.S. International Trade Commission always predicts very high and lofty job creation numbers for trade agreements, but even they are skeptical. That alone should be evidence for my colleagues that now is not the time for the Colombia free trade agreement.

Congress should be focused on creating jobs, and this trade agreement doesn't pass the smell test, although the Colombia FTA does stink when you consider that it is hardworking middle class families who will pay the price with this unfair trade agreement.

The Colombia FTA will kill jobs, drive down American wages, and drive small American companies that face unfair competition out of business. We can do better. I urge my colleagues to stop settling for not so bad and pursue a trade policy that means prosperity for everyone.

GREAT LAKES THREATENED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes are one of the most overlooked and unappreciated national assets. They are the largest source of freshwater in the world and contain 20 percent of the freshwater on Earth.

The Great Lakes face many challenges. Agricultural runoff, sewer overflows, and other pollution makes its way into the Great Lakes from across the northeast and the Midwest, leading to unsafe water quality and public health concerns. Also, invasive species hitch a ride in the ballast water of oceangoing vessels, like the zebra mussel, or swim up the Mississippi River, like the Asian carp, and threaten to alter the lakes' fragile, closed ecosystem.

In recognition of the importance of the Great Lakes and to combat the threats to their health, in 2010, 11 Federal agencies announced a plan to implement the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, an ambitious action plan to remove toxins, clean up the lakes, and protect them from further pollution and invasive species.

I am concerned that funding for this important program has been uneven. It was funded at \$475 million in fiscal year 2010, fell to \$300 million this year, and is funded at just \$250 million in the fiscal year 2012 Interior Appropriations bill the House will consider next week.

However, the mere existence of this special cleanup funding is evidence that Congress and the administration recognize the Great Lakes are a unique natural resource that deserves protection.

In 1969, the Cuyahoga River famously caught fire, symbolizing the abysmal water quality of the water in the Great Lakes basin. Legislation from the Clean Water Act and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has gone a long way toward returning the lakes to good health. However, the Great Lakes face a new threat beyond water quality: the diversion or removal of water from the Great Lakes basin.

In recognition that due to national and global trends, the value of freshwater will increase, as will the incentive to remove it from the Great Lakes, the eight States that border the Great Lakes entered into a compact with each other and two Canadian provinces on the use of Great Lakes water. Congress ratified the agreement, and it was signed into law by President Bush in 2008.

Among the most important provisions of the compact are restriction on the removal or diversion of water from the Great Lakes basin. The underlying goal was to prevent any one State from plundering the freshwater in the Great Lakes.

So it is with great concern that I learned yesterday that the Ohio State legislature had passed legislation to permit businesses to remove 5 million gallons of water a day from Lake Erie. In New York, we are about to adopt a far more reasonable limit by requiring a permit for the withdrawal of 100,000 gallons per day. The Ohio bill, if adopted, would violate the spirit of the historic Great Lakes compact and force a race to the bottom among the eight signatory States, which will result in an accelerated level of diversions and further reduce the water level in the Great Lakes beyond the impact of Ohio businesses. Such an outcome is unacceptable.

The consequence of such a large scale removal of water from the Great Lakes basin would have a devastating environmental and economic impact in my community. Water levels in the Great Lakes are already on the decline, and the additional large-scale removal of water will lead to algae blooms and reduced water quality, negatively impacting aquatic wildlife and the associated fishing industry, and reduce recreational boating and commercial shipping activities.

In my community of western New York, this action would threaten the progress we are making in Buffalo toward reclaiming the waterfront as an engine of recreational and economic opportunities.

I wrote to Ohio Governor John Kasich yesterday encouraging that he conclude, as have his predecessors Bob Taft and George Voinovich, that this legislation poses a danger to the health of our greatest regional asset, and suggesting that he veto this ill-advised legislation. I hope that he will heed that advice so advocates for the Great Lakes can focus attention on the restoration initiative and on cleaning up the lakes instead of having to fight to

protect them from massive withdrawals of freshwater for profit when the issue was supposed to have been settled years ago.

Now more than ever, it is critical that the Great Lakes remain vigilant and united against the threat of water diversion.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. George Dillard, Peachtree City Christian Church, Peachtree City, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, give us the strength to prove ourselves a people mindful of Your favor, gladly doing Your will. Bless our Nation with individuals who give honorable service, who live with integrity and govern with honesty.

Save us from prejudice, confusion, pride, arrogance, and evil. Help us that we might see truth and seek it. Defend liberty and fashion a united people out of many people and languages.

Grant us wisdom for those entrusted with the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace, and through obedience to Your law we may show Your praise among the nations. Remind us, though the rule of law is the foundation of our society, laws without justice are empty words. In prosperity fill us with thankfulness; in trouble remind us to trust in You. Thank You for those brave individuals who stand in the gap protecting our lives and liberty.

Lead us to faith in You, to good character, knowledge, discipline, patience, and love for others. Draw us together as one Nation in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. POMPEO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.